It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss challenges and opportunities in the arms control and non-proliferation fields.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains the number one national security threat facing the United States and the international community. The United States lacks even minimal confidence about many foreign weapons programs. In most cases, there is little or no information regarding the number of weapons or amounts of materials a country may have produced, the storage procedures they employ to safeguard their weapons, or plans regarding further production or destruction programs. We must pay much more attention to making certain that all weapons and materials of mass destruction are identified, continuously guarded, and systematically destroyed.

Unfortunately, the nuclear non-proliferation and arms control regimes have suffered significant setbacks in recent years. There is growing concern, both in the United States and abroad, that U.S. non-proliferation and arms control policies lack a unifying consensus on how to pursue U.S. strategic interests. As contradictions in American policy have emerged, confidence in U.S. leadership on non-proliferation and arms control has eroded and U.S. commitment is being questioned in foreign capitals. The following examples are frequently cited: The continuing inertia over negotiations regarding a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty; the failure of the Bush Administration to complete ratification of the IAEA Additional Protocol for more than a year after Congressional passage; the threat to the efficacy of the Chemical Weapons Convention due to U.S. funding shortfalls; the failure of the Bush Administration to lead in the reconstruction of the IAEA’s decrepit verification capabilities and safeguard system; the inability to reach agreement with Russia on an extension to the START Treaty verification regime; U.S. funding cuts to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty’s monitoring system, which is inconsistent with Administration policy even though the U.S. has not ratified the treaty; and questions pertaining to the U.S. response to the weapons programs of Iran and North Korea.

It is imperative to recognize that our success in controlling weapons of mass destruction depends on cooperation with other nations and on maintaining a basic consensus on non-proliferation principles. To the degree that the U.S. fails to exercise leadership or meet its own commitments, we create opportunities for others to undercut this consensus. A significant shift in American policy will be necessary if we are to fully restore American credibility and leadership on non-proliferation and arms control.

Russia:
The United States and Russia are the two most critical players in non-proliferation and arms control. Despite the rhetoric of recent months, the two countries must accept the fact that we need each other. We must be as energetic in searching for common ground as we have been lately in voicing our frustration. Kremlin rhetoric will swing from one end of the strategic spectrum to the other. Commitments will be made and then put on hold. Projects will be on and then off. Our frustration level will be high. But we must not lose patience or miss the possibilities of cooperative threat reduction.

The U.S. and Russia have worked together to implement nuclear and chemical arms control treaties. We have cooperated closely in the denuclearization of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program has become the primary tool through which the United States works with Russia to safely...
destroy its massive nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare capacity. More than 2,000 intercontinental missiles have been dismantled; 1,000 missile launchers have been eliminated; and more than 7,200 nuclear warheads have been deactivated through bilateral cooperation. Together, the United States and Russia have eliminated more nuclear weapons than the combined arsenals of the United Kingdom, France, and China. In addition, American and Russian experts have worked together to remove nuclear material from vulnerable locations around the world and to secure it in Russia.

Critics argue that Russia’s energy income windfall should cause the United States to withdraw dismantlement and non-proliferation assistance. Others attempt to resuscitate the fungibility argument, which asserts that each dollar we spend in Russia frees up dollars that Moscow can put elsewhere. But we should recall that the Nunn-Lugar program was created to safeguard our own national security interests, and these interests exist regardless of the current state of Russia’s financial fortunes.

Russia may well assume greater dismantlement and non-proliferation responsibilities in the years ahead, or it may refuse assistance even when it is needed. Moscow will make its own decisions and threat calculations. What we can do is effectively complete the work to which we are already committed under the Nunn-Lugar Program and remain prepared to move quickly should new opportunities for cooperation occur.

Beyond dismantlement, the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program has provided an operational basis for the expansion of relations between Russia and the United States. Even during moments of tension between our countries, the Nunn-Lugar program has remained a constant. Both sides recognize the importance of this endeavor to our mutual security. It has evolved far beyond just an assistance program. It is a partnership between two nations that share a common commitment to address a common threat. Our shared experiences and record of cooperation have already produced results outside of Russia. The program eliminated a formerly secret chemical weapons stockpile in Albania. Other governments, such as Pakistan, the Philippines, and Indonesia are now quietly inquiring about Nunn-Lugar assistance with dangerous weapons and materials.

I have never considered Nunn-Lugar to be merely a program, or a funding source, or a set of agreements. Rather, it is a concept through which we attempt to take control of a threat of our own making. It is an engine of non-proliferation cooperation and expertise that can be applied around the world.

The Future of Nunn-Lugar:
Presidents Bush and Putin still have time to give new direction to their bureaucracies and to lead our countries toward a stronger partnership. The United States and Russia should send the clear message that we are willing to go anywhere and undertake any conversation in pursuit of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Some may say that we cannot forge cooperative non-proliferation programs with the most troublesome nations. But the experience of the Nunn-Lugar program has demonstrated that the threat of weapons of mass destruction can lead to extraordinary outcomes based on mutual interest. No one would have predicted in the 1980s that Americans and Russians would be working together to collect dangerous weapons and materials around the world.

I am pleased to report that the Nunn-Lugar Program’s record of accomplishment will continue in 2008. A number of important projects are scheduled to be completed this year. Nunn-Lugar will eliminate the remaining SS-24 rail-mobile ICBM systems. It will provide physical security system upgrades at 24 nuclear weapons storage sites in Russia. And it will complete the first munition destruction building at the Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility at Shchuchye.

In 2008, Nunn-Lugar also will continue to assist with the elimination of SS-25 road-mobile ICBM systems, SS-18 and SS-19 ICBMs and their silos, and SS-N-20 submarine launched missiles. The United States has agreed to a cost-sharing agreement with Rosatom and Canada to dismantle Typhoon and Delta III strategic missile submarines. We await a Russian decision to make more of these systems available for elimination.

To support nuclear weapons site security upgrades, the Nunn-Lugar Program will assist the Russian Ministry of Defense in sustaining the equipment provided to assess personnel reliability, the automated inventory control and management system, and the small arms training system. Although the Russian Government has decided to reserve to itself the responsibility for sustaining U.S.-installed physical protection system upgrades at permanent nuclear weapons storage sites subordinate to the 12th Main Directorate, DoD and DOE will sustain upgrades at temporary sites, and DOE will sustain Navy and Strategic Rocket Forces sites. In addition, both departments will maintain and further develop regional centers to assist with sustainment, including training a Ministry of Defense cadre to operate and maintain the upgraded systems.

Work Needs to Start Here at Home:
Despite this impressive record of accomplishment we still have more work to do. Our first effort must be improving the Nunn-Lugar Program’s ability to operate globally. In 2003, Congress authorized $50 million in Nunn-Lugar
funding to be used outside the former Soviet Union. While this authority has already been put to good use in Albania to destroy chemical weapons, we have learned some important lessons. The Nunn-Lugar program must have the flexibility to adjust to unforeseen contingencies. The Secretary of Defense must have the authority to operate in difficult political and strategic environments without the risk that critical operations could be suspended because of the unintended consequences of executive or legislative action.

Today, the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Fund at the Department of State is the only U.S. non-proliferation program that operates with so-called “Notwithstanding Authority.” This authority allows the Administration to do non-proliferation work in any nation or environment irrespective of U.S. legal obstacles -- such as sanctions -- that might otherwise block action. While useful, the NDF is not a substitute for a Nunn-Lugar program with Notwithstanding Authority. The NDF’s budget is only about $30 million, compared to a Nunn-Lugar budget of almost half a billion dollars. The NDF operates with resource, management, and expertise limitations, some of which have been cited by the State Department Inspector General and the General Accounting Office. If we experience a breakthrough in talks with North Korea that allowed us to begin securing and dismantling its nuclear program, NDF is the only option available under current law to carry out such operations.

Granting Nunn-Lugar notwithstanding authority would not mean that Congress would be unable to adjust or restrict the program. But it would ensure that Nunn-Lugar would have the ability to respond rapidly to new non-proliferation opportunities. We should not allow bureaucratic inertia to impede potentially historic transformations in North Korea or elsewhere.

The Nunn-Lugar program would have a different orientation in North Korea, but the program has the authority, flexibility, and experience to adapt to the Korean situation. Moscow and Washington have proven that former enemies can work together to achieve shared security benefits. Such a track record will be critical to a successful diplomatic process on the Korean peninsula.

START Treaty:
In addition to increasing and accelerating non-proliferation cooperation, Presidents Bush and Putin must extend the START Treaty’s verification and transparency elements, which will expire in 2009; and they should work to add verification measures to the Moscow Treaty.

Last year, I was concerned by reports that U.S.-Russian negotiations did not include discussions of a legally binding treaty or the continuation of a formal verification regime. I am pleased to report that the Administration has changed course and will accept a legally-binding regime. If Moscow and Washington had not changed course in this matter, both sides would have regretted their decision in the years ahead. It is true that the current bilateral relationship is not the same as the U.S.-Soviet relationship. But what could the rationale have been for abandoning a legally-binding START Treaty? If both sides agree that it is necessary to have some type of verification arrangements in place, why not provide them with the force of law?

While we have put the question to rest of whether an agreement would be legally binding, we now must cross the finish line and conclude negotiations to ensure that the START Treaty does not expire. The confidence provided by the treaty and its effective verification regime will reduce the chances of misinterpretation and error. The current Russian-American relationship is complicated enough without introducing more elements of uncertainty.

I appreciate the view held by many in Washington and Moscow that the Moscow Treaty was a first step in formalizing a new strategic relationship based on transparency and confidence building measures. But we must not forget that this new concept was buttressed by the START Treaty’s verification regime. In other words, the conceptual underpinning of the Moscow Treaty depends upon something that is about to expire. The Departments of Defense and State told Congress that they recognized the integral role of START in the Moscow Treaty and that START therefore would be improved before it expired in 2009. Congress was also told that efforts would be launched to add verification mechanisms to the Moscow Treaty. Unfortunately, Administration policy today does not match the commitments made to Congress in 2002 and 2003.

I agree with the view that we should revisit Cold War arms control and verification mechanisms in light of the current Russian-American strategic relationship. But I am concerned that the “rules of the road” may become overly opaque and ill-defined if the START Treaty’s verification regime is permitted to expire. The bottom line is that failure to preserve the START Treaty would increase the potential for distrust between the two sides.

Conclusion:
Current concerns over the impact of a limited, regional missile defense system in central Europe directed at rogue states can evolve into productive discussions over a more global approach to defenses against nuclear attacks. Writing in the August 9, 2007, edition of the Washington Post, Henry Kissinger suggested that President Putin’s proposal to link NATO and Russian warning systems is one of those initiatives that is easy to disparage on technical grounds, but it is also one that allows us to “imagine a genuinely global approach to the specter of nuclear proliferation, which has until now been treated largely through national policies … If the countries involved link their strategies on the nonproliferation issue – a new framework for a host of other issues will come about.”
I agree with Secretary Kissinger. Strong cooperation in this area would be a critical boost to international security and put the U.S.-Russian relationship on firmer footing that would enhance the prospects for cooperation in other areas.

Over the years, I have described international cooperation in addressing threats posed by weapons of mass destruction as a "window of opportunity." We never know how long that window will remain open. We must eliminate those conditions that restrict us or delay our ability to act. Together, the United States and Russia have the technical expertise, the diplomatic standing, and the mutual incentives to dramatically benefit international security. American and Russian leaders must continue to work closely together to ensure that we have the political will and the resources to implement programs devoted to these ends.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to an important discussion.

###